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Evacuations lifted as California blaze nearly controlled



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - All evacuation orders were lifted Sunday in California as firefighters battling a massive wildfire near Los Angeles said they had contained 60 percent of the blaze.

The inferno, the biggest in a series of wildfires fueled by tinder-dry brush and soaring temperatures this week -- months before the usual wildfire season -- is expected to be fully under control by Monday, said the California

state agency coordinating the efforts.

"There is minimal fire activity on the Springs Incident," CAL FIRE said on its website.

"Remaining firefighters continue to construct control lines, mop up operations and patrol the fire perimeter. Fire suppression repair and rehabilitation has begun within the fire area."

Continued on pg 6

Chamber of Commerce observes preliminary report given by IMF

After the Chamber of Commerce' visit with a delegation of the IMF, they received the IMF's preliminary report, and have issued a bulletin with their remarks with respect to this report, in response to requests from the press.

According to the Chamber, IMF has provided their first impression of what will be their final report. They have presented a balanced and cautious report. In the report they recognize the efforts made to withstand two crisis which hit Aruba, the global financial crisis of 2008/2009 and the closure of the Valero refinery. While making gradual economic recovery, Aruba is still at the 12% level less than before the 2008 crisis.

The fiscal deficit is projected to go down in 2013,

which will be an enormous task to accomplish. To ensure a continuous growth will require maintaining competitiveness through diversity of the tourism market and by keeping the increase of salaries within the line of the development of productivity. This, according to the Chamber is what the report indicates in its introduction.

IMF reports that unemployment has decreased considerably in 2008; nevertheless it has remained very high at 9.5% by the end of 2012 as a result of the closure of the refinery. For 2013, they envision an economic growth of little more than 2% based on a robust tourism and an improved spending power because of more favorable water and electricity tariffs. Nonetheless, the closure of

the refinery has created a lack of private investment which is difficult to fill which may put our GDP to the level before the 2008 crisis on up to about 2018.

According to the Chamber, IMF also indicates that an ambitious fiscal consolidation will be necessary to create the space for fiscal management. Despite the measures taken, Aruba's fiscal position has deteriorated enormously as of 2008. By 2012 they envision a government deficit of 8.5% of GDP. Reforms have taken place with respect to pension and medical care through national social dialogues, yet these measures have not been sufficient to contain the rapid growth of the deficit.

Continued on pg 3

Dutch Remembrance Day is observed in Aruba



Photo depicts the Royal Dutch Marine Honor Guard. This past Saturday, May 4th, as the sun set, the official Dutch Day of Remembrance for the lives lost during World War II, was observed with a ceremony. (see story on pg 4)

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Bio-Fuel Aruba in search of key partners

Bio-Fuel Aruba is a local company founded in 2007 with the view of solving an existing problem on our local dump. On the dump, they had a situation where an enormous amount of used cooking oil could not be managed in a sustainable and safe manner.

This caused grave concerns for our environment and the health of our people. Consequently, a group of environmentalists and entrepreneurs began a small plant to recycle this oil and produce clean and renewable combustible known as biodiesel.

Bio-Fuel has become the

first biodiesel in Aruba which is commercially sustainable. The company is now considering expanding. The company has grown to the point where they have installed their first biodiesel pump station for their clients. Hence, making the company one with a solid reputation and the pioneer in the biodiesel industry.

The product produced by Bio-Fuel is a combustible called "carbon neutral," which fits perfectly in the context of people and companies looking for ways to do business in harmony with the environment.

Bio-Fuel's participation at Europe Meets the Americas is particularly in search of expanding their client base regionally as well as in Europe.

What's more, Bio-Fuel Aruba as a new company in our region considers it essential to join with other businesses which can contribute to their resources and expertise.

The ambition of Bio-Fuel Aruba is to make use of the network in their specialty to help Bio-Fuel Aruba grow and become the leader in producing biodiesel in the Caribbean. They hope to be able to use the networking



opportunities during Europe Meets the Americas to achieve this ambition. The Europe Meets the Americas Conference (www.europe-meetsamericas.com) is taking place here on May 6th, 7th

and 8th and will offer interesting opportunities for Bio-Fuel Aruba. They hope to achieve an even higher level and open doors for international development especially in Latin America.



Aandeelhouders van N.V. ELMAR;
 Raad van Commissarissen N.V. ELMAR;
 Directie van N.V. ELMAR;
 PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

Geachte heren,

Met inachtneming van artikel 21 roep ik hierbij een Algemene Vergadering van Aandeelhouders bijeen ten kantore van Utilities Aruba N.V. op maandag 13 mei 2013 om 08:30 uur.

De agenda van deze vergadering luidt als volgt;

1. Opening.
2. Goedkeuring notulen AVA van 23 november 2012.
3. Jaarrekening 2012.
4. Rondvraag.
5. Sluiting.

Nadere informatie omtrent de agenda ligt ter inzage ten kantore van Utilities Aruba N.V.

Hoogachtend,


 Utilities Aruba N.V.
 Drs. Franklin Hoevertsz.
 Directeur.

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Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital celebrates Nurses Week



Viveca Wiersma

Today, May 6th, our local hospital, Dr. Horacio E. Oduber, is celebrating Nurses Week. Hospital Social Worker, Viveca Wiersma has informed us that Nurses Week is a global event which Aruba certainly also observes every year. In the past they celebrated Nurses Day, but that has been changed to Nurses Week.

As of last year, the Aruban Parliament declared this is a national nurses week.

During this week, according to Viveca Wiersma, they will be following the international program dubbed... "Closing the Gap." This is so that they can achieve the goals they have set globally. For Aruba it is very important to have the necessary tools in order to achieve certain goals.... "and we are achieving them," says Wiersma.

The nurses week will consist of 4 days of activity. Today they open the week and will have some invitees to celebrate the inauguration with them. This will be followed by a surprise for all invitees and workers of the Hospital.

On Tuesday, the 7th, there will be a presentation for all workers along with feedback from patients to help improve the service. In the afternoon

there will be a Zumba with the theme ... "ta un ehempel." This is to encourage our patients to live more healthy.

On Wednesday the 8th, there will be an activity for employees. They will have a tremendous presentation by a Mariachi musical group walking throughout the Hospital. Every department may request their favorite Mariachi song. This will be a great delight as everybody enjoys Mariachi music.

In the evening they will have a theater presentation at the Aruba Crystal Theater. This activity will be for employees to express themselves relative to their department, what their jobs entail and what happens in their departments.

On Friday will be a special day for all Hospital workers. They will all enjoy a special breakfast together with all employees of the Hospital. In the afternoon they will install the committee intended to give advice to the Board of Directors in representation of all nurses. This, they claim, will be a very important and historic moment.

Viveca Wiersma wants to put the accent on an activity planned for Wednesday the 8th, which is held on their so called "Open Dag" (open-house day) which they have dubbed... "Publico ta Conta" (the public is important).

They want to encourage the public to come and provide feedback regarding the work of the nurses of the Hospital. This activity begins at 8:00 in the morning and will run through to 1:00 in the afternoon. They encourage everyone to come out and participate in this activity.

Chamber of Commerce observes preliminary information given by IMF

Continued from pg 1

The IMF delegation sees a reduction in the budgetary deficit as a very urgent matter and is of the opinion that a reduction of 6% of GDP is achievable by 2013. The government is intent on cutting the deficit by 4.6% in 2013 according to their projections to 2016. In order to keep the deficit at 6%, IMF recommends resisting the pressure to increase expenses in an election year.

According to IMF, the government will have to implement, in the short term, additional measures in order to consolidate her fiscal position, says the Chamber of Commerce. Without additional measures, the government's fiscal deficit will remain high in the medium term, running the risk that public debt will reach unachievable high levels. One threat is the AOV which the government will have to cover in the upcoming years as well as payments to the PPP (Public Private Partnership), which by 2014 can cause an increase in the deficit. Hence they recommend more pension reform and to put a limit to expenses related to PPP. There is a pending debate regarding increasing the pension age, which according to the Chamber is inevitable since the increase of the AOV premium has not resulted in being a good option.

IMF sees the increase of income as well as cutting cost very necessary matters in order to consolidate the government's financial position. The government's plan to achieve a balanced budget by 2016, basically through reducing spending, is seen as very positive. The cost of personnel is the biggest item on the government's budget, and obviously the major part of the burden is the adjustment needed in this category.

To increase income they recommend to introduce a sort of Value Added Tax (VAT, BTW), something that the Chamber has favored for years. This should be done with the removal of the BBO, should this be implemented.

With respect to a continu-

ous recovery, it will be necessary to continue our efforts to diversify the economy and maintain our competitiveness.

IMF supports the development in the energy renewal sector, yet we must be cautious about its financing.

In view of our adverse demographics (aging and the scarcity of laborers), the correct route to choose is a new economic pillar oriented towards capital and technology, and based on available natural resources.

They recommend that this be done through foreign financing to maintain the extreme sustainability of Aruba, so as to not continue the deteriorating government financial position.

The Chamber of Commerce added these comments to their bulletin:

-IMF sees the time ahead as being very difficult with a

moderate economic growth which will not help with a sizeable increase in income for the government.

-It is not advisable to continue with such a high level of the budgetary deficit which needs external financing.

-Achieve a balanced budget can be achieved by reducing spending, which will require cutting cost in the government's apparatus, specifically that of personnel.

-To avoid an increase in future deficit, they must practice responsible financing with respect to, among others, AOV and PPP.

-Recommend the introduction of a BTW (VAT, IVA) which must be within the context of a profound revision of our fiscal regimen, something that the Chamber has been proposing for many years.



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Dutch Remembrance Day is observed in Aruba



This past Saturday, May 4th, as the sun set, the official Dutch Day of Remembrance for the lives lost during World War II, was observed with a ceremony held at the War Memorial located on Adrian Lacle Boulevard, where it intersects L.G. Smith Boulevard.

Holland has its own way of mourning those lost, which takes place on the eve of celebrating the country's liberation from five years of occupation. On May 4th and 5th, The entire Kingdom of the Netherlands, including its Caribbean territories, unites to observe a day of remembrance followed by a day of jubilant festivities. On Aruba, the Ceremonial Corp of the Royal Dutch Marines and a number of Dutch residents joined Aruban officials and

dignitaries for the solemn occasion.

Since the end of the WWII, the Dutch have observed May 4th as a day of reflection; a day to honor the victims of war not with loud parades, but individual prayers for peace. Across Holland, citizens gather at war memorials in their communities and at the stroke of 8:00 PM, the entire country observes a two-minute silence.

During this year's remembrance ceremony on Aruba, Marine Pastor Gert Pennekamp gave the benediction while Prime Minister Mike Eman gave a brief address remembering "Boy" Ecury, an Aruban son who lost his life fighting in the Dutch Resistance, and some famous names who fell to violence

and hate, such as Anne Frank and Martin Luther King. He encouraged the gathering to believe, as they did, "in the goodness and kindness of people," despite the horrid actions of war.

After the two minutes of silence, Governor Fredis Rufenjol and Adjutant Roel Samson began the annual ritual of placing memorial wreaths at the base of the monument. Aruba has also its own war dead to remember, and members of the Ecury and Nicolas families, who had lost relatives during the war, represented the families of those that went to battle in Europe during WW II. Other wreaths were placed on behalf of the parliament by President of Parliament, Paul Croes. A wreath was placed by Aruba's remaining mem-

bers of the Shutterrij, those who served on Aruba during the war protecting the refinery, which was an essential asset to the Allies, as well as the power and water plants. During WWII, Aruba experienced a number of attempts to destroy these facilities by roving German U-Boat wolf packs.

The Dutch Delegation to Aruba also places a wreath, and the ceremony was completed by Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Hofma, Commandant of the Royal Dutch Marine Camp in Savaneta, placing a wreath and saluting the war dead listed on the memorial.

The tradition of honoring those who defended the Kingdom of the Netherlands is passed on to island youth each year by having an outstanding student recite a

poem or original thesis of what the act of remembrance and the hope for peace signifies to them. This year, Kelsey Giel of the Aruba Lions Club was selected for that honor.

In Holland, the close of the Remembrance Day ceremony signals the start of Liberation Day festivities commemorating Germany's capitulation on May 5, 1945. War veterans gather in Wageningen, where the historic documents were signed, and parade through the city in salutation of the anniversary of liberty regained. This year is the 63th anniversary of Holland's liberation by Canada, but since Aruba was never physically occupied, it does not observe that holiday.

By Rosalie Klein

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Timothy Zehring is this year's keynote speaker for the 2013 Mind Your Eye Conference

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Timothy Zehring

Timothy Zehring is this year's keynote speaker for the 2013 Mind Your Eye Conference. This year's topic is "Combating and Preventing Crime." Zehring is considered one of the most recognized experts on crime prevention.

Zehring has worked for the Mesa Police Department near Phoenix, Arizona where

he trained numerous police officers in crime prevention. Zehring is still very active in his field and is currently Executive Director of Emeritus International Crime Free Association, which he founded back in 1992. He is a well known speaker at international conferences where he shares his expertise with judicial authorities, government executives and business owners.

In his morning presentation at the "Mind Your Eye Conference" here, he will speak on the multiple strategies regarding security and the common technologies being used to prevent criminality. Zehring will demonstrate how easy it is for the technology to fail. Research has shown that businesses that depend solely on technology rather than on proper security training are the most

vulnerable for crimes.

In the afternoon session Zehring will focus on armed attacks, the prevention of technological crimes and on strategies used for a large number of different types of crimes. He will demonstrate how easy technology can fail, the importance of awareness and why training of security must emphasize the protection of the individual and the utilities of the business.

Timothy Zehring will share valuable tips and will gladly answer questions regarding the prevention of crimes.

This conference is being organized by HW Training and Development Associates and is scheduled to take place on May 24th at the Hyatt Regency Resort Aruba.

For more information concerning the conference, please visit their website at: www.hwtrainingaruba.org.

Early Bird Menu

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm



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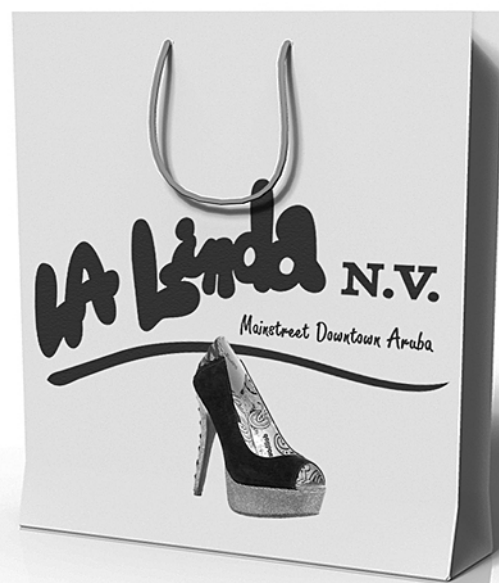
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Obama concludes Latin America trip with trade focus

SAN JOSE (AFP) - US President Barack Obama turned the spotlight on economic ties with Latin America on Saturday, as he concluded a three-day trip to a region roiled by drug violence.

Obama sought to shift the narrative away from the drug war during visits to Mexico and Costa Rica this week, praising trade as a path to fighting poverty and creating jobs that turn young people away from a life of crime.

"The United States recognizes that our fate is tied up with your success," Obama told an economic forum in San Jose alongside Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla before flying back to Washington.

"It's a partnership based on equality and mutual respect, mutual interests," he said, one day after attending a summit with Central American leaders.

"If you're doing well, we'll do better, if we're doing well,

we think your situation improves."

The US leader, turning his gaze to domestic issues, also highlighted commerce with neighbors as a way to generate jobs in the United States, one day after a jobs report showed the unemployment rate falling to 7.5 percent.

"Latin America represents an incredible opportunity for the United States, especially when it comes to my top priority as president: creating good, middle-class jobs," he said in his weekly radio address.

More than 40 percent of US exports go to the Americas, and US trade there is growing faster than in the rest of the world, he said.

"That's why I visited Latin America this week -- to work with leaders to deepen our economic ties and expand trade between our nations," said Obama.

At the economic forum, Obama said Central American leaders brought up energy in their discussions at a summit late Friday and that they shared the goal of creating more renewable energy sources.

"It's my view that if any of us find good answers to renewable energy, that will spread like wildfire and everybody will ultimately benefit," he said.

Turning to another domestic issue dear to Latin Americans, he told the forum that it was important to have a "well managed border" and that passing comprehensive immigration reform "can make an enormous difference."

Obama is pressing the US Congress to pass immigration reform, to bring 11 million undocumented workers -- most of them from Mexico and Central America -- "out of the shadows" with a path toward citizenship.

Evacuations lifted as California blaze nearly controlled

Continued from pg 1

At its height, some 1,900 personnel -- including from Los Angeles and other neighboring areas -- were battling the wind-fanned flames, helped by 247 fire engines, six air tankers and 11 helicopters.

Those numbers have since decreased as the danger appeared to be controlled.

The fire had been said to threaten about 4,000 homes in the rugged hills north of Malibu, some 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Los Angeles, and hundreds of residents had been forced to flee.

But just 25 outbuildings were destroyed and another 15 homes, five commercial properties and 15 outbuildings were damaged by the flames, authorities said.

Five firefighters received minor injuries -- including two from falling and three with debris in their eyes.

Another firefighter and a civilian were injured in a traffic accident away from the fire, said the Ventura County Fire Department.

The total area burnt was 28,000 acres (11,331 hectares) -- a figure that had not changed since Friday, when the fire, fueled by strong Santa Ana winds and temperatures in the 90s (30s Celsius), spread north.

But cooler temperatures and higher humidity on Saturday helped firefighters make progress.

Air humidity, which had dropped to below five percent on Thursday when the blaze erupted, was up to 75 percent by late Saturday, and rain was forecast for Sunday through Tuesday.

US gun group vows to 'stand up and fight' regulation

HOUSTON, Texas (AFP) - Clutching the shattered shell of a policeman's sidearm, conservative guru Glenn Beck warned the National Rifle Association that a tyrannical US government is bent on taking their guns away.

More than 70,000 members of the nation's premier gun rights organization have flocked to Texas for the NRA's annual meeting, hard on the heels of the defeat of new federal gun laws in the US Senate.

But Beck warned a cheering crowd gathered for a "Stand and Fight Rally" late Saturday that the battle is far from over -- and that there is far more at stake than just gun control.

"They want to fundamentally transform our country and they've just about finished the project," Beck said.

"They feel they must regulate us until we comply, but I will not comply."

Beck warned that if Americans allow the government to infringe upon their right to 'bear arms' as enshrined in the second amendment of the US Constitution, then every other

right and fundamental freedom will also be lost.

"The second amendment was written to protect our natural rights, and we have also the responsibility to throw off the chains of tyranny," he claimed.

Beck used historically significant guns as props to illustrate his point in an emotional, nearly two-hour long speech.

The most poignant was that of New York City police officer Walter Weaver, a lifelong NRA member, who died trying to save others in the World Trade Center during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Gun control advocates converged on the Houston convention center hoping to combat the NRA's message with a vigil for the more than 30,000 people killed by guns in the United States every year.

The powerful lobby group -- which claims 4.5 million members plus support from the multibillion dollar firearms industry -- faced its first major challenge in years after a school shooting left 20 young children and six educators dead in Newtown, Connecticut in December.

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International News

Police busts giant marijuana ring in Spain, Netherlands

MADRID (AFP) - Spanish police on week-end said a giant drug ring has been busted in Spain and the Netherlands, leading to the arrest of 21 people and the seizure of some 13,000 marijuana plants.

The justice ministry announced the seizure in a statement, saying it was one of Spain's biggest successes in the fight against drugs on record.

The majority of the people arrested, suspected of cultivating the plants and trafficking, were Dutch nationals, it said.

The ministry described the network as being perfectly organised which used highly qualified staff in the cultivation of its marijuana plants in the south-eastern province of Malaga.

When the traffickers returned to Spain from the Netherlands, they brought ecstasy with them for distribution on Costa del Sol.

On Friday, Spain announced it had seized 32 tonnes of hashish in a truck carrying melons from Morocco.



Israel warplanes strike near Syria capital

DAMASCUS (AFP) - Israeli raids early Sunday hit three military sites outside Damascus, the second such reported attack in 48 hours, prompting Syria's government to warn that the regional situation was now "more dangerous."

The raids reportedly targeted weapons bound for Lebanese group Hezbollah and raised new concerns that the conflict could spill over.

The foreign ministry, in a letter to the UN Security Council, said claims it was transferring anything were "unfounded" and accused Israel of coordinating with "terrorist groups."

A diplomatic source in Beirut told AFP the three sites were the Jamraya military facility, a nearby weapons depot and an anti-aircraft unit in Sabura, west of the capital.

The cabinet held an emergency meeting, warning afterwards that "the aggression opens the door wide to all possibilities."

"The international community should know that the complex situation in the region has become more dangerous after this aggression," it added.

The foreign ministry letter said the strikes were evidence that Israel was working with "terrorist groups" including the

rebel jihadist Al-Nusra Front, which has pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed "grave concern", his spokesman Martin Nesirky said.

"The secretary general calls on all sides to exercise maximum calm and restraint, and to act with a sense of responsibility to prevent an escalation of what is already a devastating and highly dangerous conflict," Nesirky said.

Egypt condemned the strikes as a "violation" of international law and the Cairo-based Arab League demanded UN Security Council intervention to stop such Israeli attacks.

Iran's Defence Minister General Ahmad Vahidi said "the assault, which was carried out with the US green light, unveils the links between the terrorist mercenaries and their

masters of the Zionist regime."

Britain warned of the "increasing danger to the peace of that entire region from the Syria crisis just getting worse and worse."

More than 70,000 people have been killed in Syria in just over two years.

Sunday's strike came around 48 hours after a reported Israeli raid on a weapons storage facility at Damascus airport, southeast of the city.

Residents of the upscale Damascus neighbourhood of Dumar said Sunday's strike turned night into day.

At least 35 people were killed in violence on Sunday, according to an initial toll from the Observatory.

US President Barack Obama, speaking after the first reported attack this week, said Israel was justified in protecting itself.



Thousands protest against 'Mr Weak' François Hollande

PARIS (AFP) - Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of Paris on Sunday to mark Socialist President Francois Hollande's first year in office by accusing him of turning his back on the left. On the eve of the anniversary of his May 6 win last year over right-winger Nicolas Sarkozy, the Communist-backed Left Front gathered supporters for the march from the Bastille, the iconic square of the French Revolution. Thousands also gathered meanwhile for separate protests in Paris and other cities to oppose the government's plans to legalise same-sex marriage and adoption by gay couples. The demonstrations come with polls showing Hollande as the most unpopular president in modern French history. Many voters are angered by an economy on the edge of recession and unemployment hitting a 16-year high. Jean-Luc Melenchon, the Left Front's firebrand candidate in last year's presidential vote, called the protest in Paris last month at the height of a scandal over Hollande's ex-budget minister Jerome Cahuzac being charged with tax fraud.

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Health & Living

Caffeine in kids' foods 'dangerous': US regulator

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The US food and drug regulator called the addition of caffeine to children's foods like chewing gum and jelly beans "dangerous" and warned of a possible crackdown.

Food and Drug Administration deputy commissioner Michael Taylor said the rise in such caffeine-added products outside the beverage industry was "very disturbing," after candy giant Mars Inc. announced a caffeinated version of its Wrigley gum.

That was added last month to a slew of "high energy" foods on the market sporting substantial added caffeine, including pancake syrups, instant oatmeal, waffles, potato chips, marshmallows and sunflower seeds.

"The gum is just one more unfortunate example of the trend to add caffeine to food."

Taylor said in a comment on the FDA website.

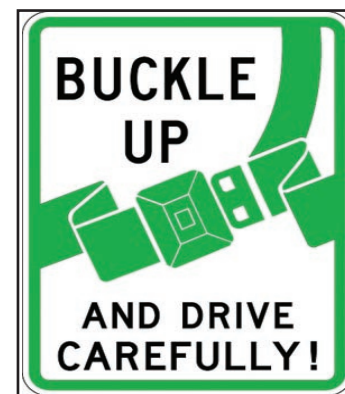
"One pack of this gum is like having four cups of coffee in your pocket."

Critics say Wrigley products are generally available on the market to people of all ages.

"Our concern is about caffeine appearing in a range of new products, including ones that may be attractive and readily available to children and adolescents, without careful consideration of their cumulative impact," Taylor said.

Taylor said the FDA has not specifically regulated caffeine use since it first allowed the pick-up to be added to colas in the 1950s.

In 2010, the FDA moved to block the addition of caffeine in alcoholic beverages, and late last year raised questions about high-caffeine "energy drinks" after several deaths were linked to the consumption of one brand, Monster Energy.



Rising alcohol levels give wine lovers a headache

BORDEAUX (AFP) - Do those New World Cabernets and Zinfandels make your head spin? Fed up with having to stop drinking after just one glass?

Plenty of wine lovers around the world will have noticed their favourite tipples are getting stronger, and many of them are unhappy about the hangovers that come with increased alcohol levels.

But it seems they have only themselves to blame as experts say that changing consumer tastes are mainly responsible

for driving the trend.

Wine critics and advances in winemaking techniques also shoulder some of the blame for what experts say are unbalanced wines that can cause health risks and safety issues, casting a pall over the pleasure of imbibing.

Over the last two decades, drinkers have developed a passion for fruity, aromatic wines with round, silky tannins, encouraged by high ratings from critics.

Even for growers who favour elegance over "fruit

bombs", the quest for ripe tannins has led to grapes with more sugar, which transforms during fermentation into higher alcohol levels.

"I would stress that higher alcohol levels are never our aim, but rather the logical consequence of the way we work in the vineyards today, which has evolved considerably compared to how it was 20 or more years ago," says Christian Seely, managing director of AXA Millesime's wine estates in France and Portugal.

A couple of decades ago,

yields were twice what they are today, and very little sorting was done to select the best fruit.

The alcohol levels might have been lower, but the tannins were often unripe, requiring years of cellaring to soften.

Today vintners look for mature tannins in the grape skins and seeds -- phenolic ripeness in the industry jargon -- before the harvest, even if it means higher sugar content.

But wine drinkers now say the alcohol levels have gone too far.



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Google recognises 'Palestine' on homepage

JERUSALEM (AFP) - Internet giant Google has recognised the Palestinians' upgraded UN status, placing the name "Palestine" on its search engine instead of "Palestinian Territories," the US company said, raising the ire of Israel.

The domain name www.google.ps, Google's search engine for the territories, now brings up a homepage with "Palestine" written

underneath the Google logo.

The UN General Assembly on November 29 upgraded Palestine to the status of non-member observer state by a vote of 138 votes in favour, nine against and 41 abstentions.

Palestinian authorities have since begun to use the "State of Palestine" in diplomatic correspondence and issued official stamps for the purpose.

Israel questioned Google's decision.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's telecommunications adviser Sabri Saydam said Google's move was "a step in the right direction".

"We hope Google maps will also show the fact that Palestinian land has been stolen from Israel's colonisation," he told AFP.

The Palestinians' bid for UN observer status angered Israel and the United States, who were among the few countries to vote against it, with top US diplomats warning the Palestinians that they had essentially achieved nothing.

And in an apparent response the following day, Israel announced plans to build 3,000 new settler homes in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, which were condemned internationally as a setback to peace.

Palestinians demand a cessation of Jewish settlement building in Palestinian territories as a precondition for any return to the negotiating table.

Sci-Tech

Mexican Senate approves telecom reform

MEXICO CITY (AFP) - Mexico's Senate approved a legislation to open up the telecommunications industry, a sector dominated by TV giant Televisa and billionaire Carlos Slim's phone empire.

The bill, already approved by the lower house, is one of the signature reforms being pushed by President Enrique Pena Nieto, who took office in December with a vow to improve the country's competitiveness.

"What we are doing is opening (the market) to competition," Jorge Luis Preciado, a member of the Senate's radio, film and television committee, told a radio station. "Now it's everybody against everybody."

Slim's fixed-line phone company, Telmex, controls 80

percent of the industry while his cellphone service, Telcel, holds 70 percent of the mobile market.

The legislation also aims to break the dominance of the country's two powerful television broadcasters, Televisa and TV Azteca. Televisa holds 70 percent of broadcast television and 60 percent of the cable market.

The legislation passed with 108 votes in favor and three against, with the backing of the leaders of the main opposition parties, the conservative National Action Party (PAN) and the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD).

Pena Nieto's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) entered a grand alliance with its two opposition rivals, dubbed Pact for Mexico, to push the president's reform agenda, which has already overhauled labor laws and the education system.

The telecom reform passed despite tensions within the pact over allegations that the PRI was using social programs to win regional elections in July.

The legislation aims to increase foreign investment, allowing non-Mexican companies to own 100 percent of the capital of a phone firm - compared to 49 percent today -- and almost half of radio and television broadcasters -- compared to zero today.

Two new autonomous regulators will also be created under the reform. A telecoms regulator, Ifetel, will have the power to approve or revoke concessions while a federal competition commission will fight monopolies.

Mayer's base pay of \$454,862 was fattened with a \$1.12 million performance bonus and about \$35 million in stock, according to a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Mayer's annual base pay this year will be one million dollars and she is eligible for many times that amount in stock and bonuses if she hangs on to the post.

Beginning this year, Mayer will also be eligible to enjoy benefits generally available to other top Yahoo! executives, such as 20 days of vacation annually.

In addition to a \$1 million annual salary, Mayer will get \$2 million yearly in bonus cash if Yahoo! hits financial performance marks, according to paperwork filed with the SEC.

Mayer (38)-- one of Google's first employees -- became one of the most prominent women in Silicon Valley when she was appointed Yahoo! chief executive in July.

She was the first female engineer at Google and among its high-ranking executives when she left for the Yahoo! post.

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ACROSS

1. Brisk pace
5. Hendrix of music
9. Rainy mo.
12. Actress Deborah
13. Deplaned
14. Brit's bathroom
15. Korbut of gymnastics
16. Gym clothes material
17. Ford midsize car
18. Wheeling's

20. Edible, tropical tuber
22. Give great praise to
26. Round wooden stick
29. Guy's partner
30. Biol., e.g.
31. Spongelike cake
32. Cool _____ cucumber (2 wds.)
33. Our planet
36. ABC rival
37. Waistcoat
39. "Prelude _____ Kiss" (2 wds.)
40. Third letter
41. Highway curves

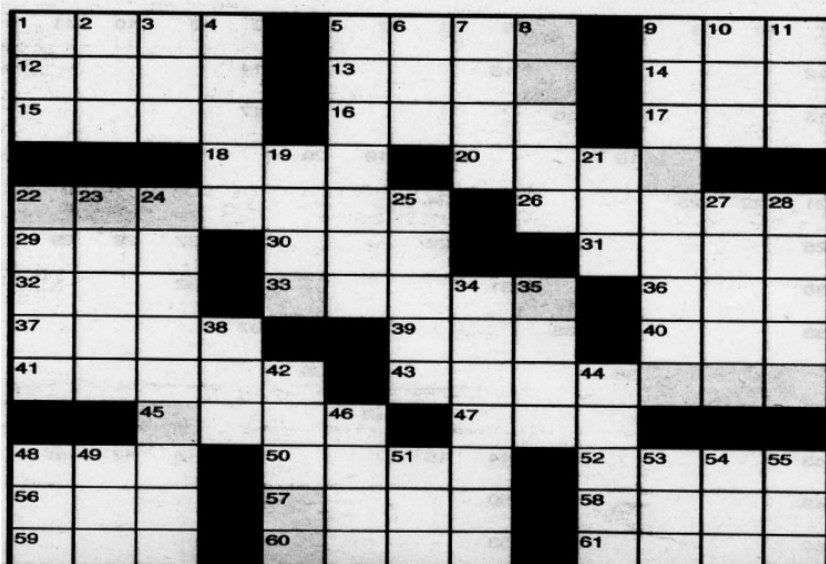
43. Sites of intense activity
45. Clarinet's need
47. "_____ for Two"
48. Frat house letter
50. Puccini heroine
52. Flightless bird
56. Charged atom
57. "Terrible" czar
58. Smooth
59. Cribbage marker
60. Chanted
61. School table

DOWN

1. Ring win (abbr.)
2. Cousin or nephew

(abbr.)

3. Gp.
4. Fish with a net
5. Kingston's island
6. _____ du Diable (Devil's Island)
7. Water vapor
8. "_____ to Be You" (2 wds.)
9. Teenager's stipend
10. Saucepan
11. Lightning _____
19. Bud holder
21. Pilfer
22. Desert plant
23. Lawyers' workloads
24. School jewelry (2 wds.)
25. Glee
27. Flowed back
28. Openwork fabrics
34. Beeping
35. Strong emotion
38. Links gadget
42. Big rigs
44. Made bread
46. Opera singer
48. Die mark
49. Weed digger
51. Gent
53. "_____ Got a Secret"
54. Cager Unseld
55. Pen filler



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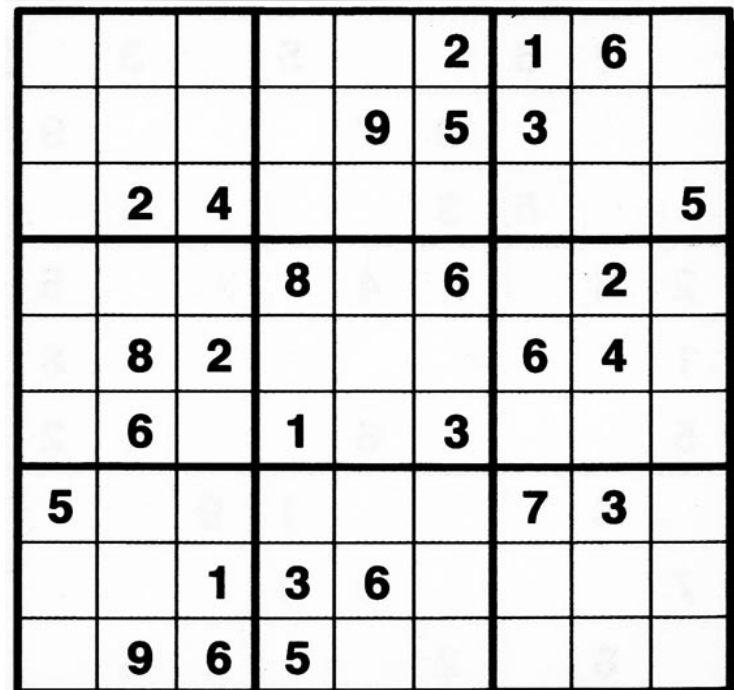
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1	2	5	9	4	8	6	3	7
5	7	6	1	3	9	4	2	8
2	8	3	9	6	7	1	5	4
4	6	1	2	8	7	3	5	9

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Finance

US billionaire Warren Buffet optimistic on stocks

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US billionaire Warren Buffet said the US economy is moving in the right direction and praised the policies of both president George W. Bush and Barack Obama as "the right things," in an interview that aired Sunday.

US stocks soared to new closing records Friday after a strong US jobs report, which had unemployment fall to 7.5 percent, revived confidence in the economic recovery.

The 82-year-old investor, who is known as the "Sage of Omaha," said he was optimistic stock prices would continue to rise.

"They don't look overpriced. They certainly look more attractive than fixed-income investments to me," he said in the interview that aired on ABC's "This Week" talk show.

He said the economy has been improving gradually over the last four years, and it will take time before the US experiences more rapid growth.

But he said the monetary and fiscal stimulus enacted under Bush and Obama were the right moves to counter the economic crisis of 2008.

"Nothing is perfect, but we had some huge problems in 2008. And our country is doing reasonably well coming out of that," Buffet said.

"It's a lot slower than people would like, but it was a lot bigger problem than any of us had ever seen."

"I generally approve of what the latter stages of it hit, what the Bush administration did. I approve of what the Obama administration has done," he added.

The chief executive of Berkshire Hathaway, a holding company with 76 busi-

nesses, also spoke in favor of immigration reform that would offer foreign students the chance to become citizens and reiterated comments that the US would benefit by making structural changes to ensure women are not relegated to a small sector of the economy.

A US Labor Department report on Friday showed the US economy added 165,000 jobs in April, well above market expectations, and also revised upward estimates from the previous two months.

The gains came even as taxes rose and government spending tightened under the sharp "sequester" cuts, which still threaten to hold economic growth back this year.

Dubai repays \$910 mn matured bonds: govt

DUBAI (AFP) - The Dubai government said Sunday it has repaid in full \$910 million of maturing bonds, declaring it reflected a commitment of the indebted Gulf emirate to honour its obligations.

"All the outstanding notes were redeemed in full," upon maturity on April 23, the government said in a statement referring to the bond issue valued at 3.34 billion dirhams (\$910 million).

The bonds were issued under the government's 15-billion-dirham Medium Term Note Programme dated April 14, 2008, it said, adding repayments included all outstanding notes and accrued interest.

"This repayment reaffirms Dubai government's commitment to deal with its repayment

obligations in a proactive manner," said Abdulrahman Saleh al-Saleh, head of the finance department.

"It also strengthens the government's resolve to honour all its financial obligations on time," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

Dubai rocked global markets in 2009 when its largest group Dubai World signalled a need to freeze payments on debt exceeding \$26 billion, before getting government help and reaching an agreement with lenders to restructure \$14.7 billion.

The emirate's economy contracted 2.4 percent in 2009, but it has since made a comeback, growing 2.8 percent in 2010 and 3.4 percent in 2011, as tourism, trade and transport keep expanding.



DENVER (AFP) - Mexican immigrants work on a housing development on week-end in Denver, Colorado. The resurgent housing market has helped drive down unemployment nationwide for American workers but also for undocumented immigrants, many of whom work in construction.

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Crisis-hit Greece sees rise in social inequality

ATHENS (AFP) - After six consecutive years of brutal recession, with homeless and unemployment rates skyrocketing, Greek society is experiencing an "unheard-of fragmentation", made worse by fierce austerity measures, experts say.

Battered by the eurozone's three-year debt crisis and four years of austerity, Greece has the highest unemployment rate in the 27-nation European Union, with more than one in four people out of work.

And this economic crisis has now transformed into a social emergency, according to UN expert on debt and human rights, Cephias Lumina.

During a recent visit to the country, Lumina said there had been "an estimated 25 percent increase in the country's homeless population since 2009" and the poverty rate for under-17s was close to 44 percent.

"Adjusted for inflation and using 2009 as the fixed poverty threshold, more than one out of three Greeks (38 percent) had already fallen below the poverty line in 2012," he estimated.

Drastic spending cuts imposed by the country's international creditors in exchange for multi-billion-euro bailouts has made a difficult situation even worse, many believe.

One of 13,000 people demonstrating on traditional

May Day marches, Yannis Pappageorgiou, a teacher specialised in special needs children, said austerity had pushed the country back to levels of care last seen in ancient times.

Another protester, trained archeologist Eleni Mlouke, who has been out of work for two years, said that even a top-level education was no guarantee of progress in today's Greece.

Economic pressures have meant that Greek society is experiencing an "unheard-of fragmentation", economist Dionysis Balourdis told AFP, with output shrinking by some 20 percent during the six years of recession.

"The middle class has shrunk and is getting close to the poverty line, while the poor are getting poorer, which makes the inequality worse," said the expert.

According to EU data, Greece ranks close to the bottom of the bloc in terms of poverty, with only Spain, Romania and Bulgaria worse off.

Lumina said that what he termed "excessively rigid" austerity measures were endangering citizens' "right to work, social security, healthcare and housing."

Greece was obliged by its EU and International Monetary Fund creditors to slash its minimum wage to 570 euros (\$747) in 2012.

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Fundraising was super fun while Rockin' for the Arts at Hard Rock Cafe



ISA Principal Putnam and hubby with Hard Rock Aruba GM Mauritzio



Hard Rock Sharmaine Tromp and Sarah Putnam

--Fundraising galas and concerts are commonplace on Aruba, but few have rocked attendees as did Saturday night, May 4 at Hard Rock Cafe in Palm Beach. The cause: a new arts center for the International School of Aruba, ISA. The brilliant premise: gather together some of the most noteworthy popular musicians living on Aruba sprinkled with a few guest celebrity performers, then combine with a yummy buffet of Hard Rock Cafe signature dishes, and a jolly group ready to hit the dance floor for a great evening made better, as it was for a worthy cause.

One of Aruba's most popular guitarists, Ernesto Ferroi, is veteran performer who spent years touring, composing music and recording with the famed Venezuelan band, Gill-



A great buffet of Hard Rock signature dishes

man. He recruited some of his good friends, Hildward Croes, who was featured on the keyboards and toured with Juan Luis Guerra. Completing the round up for this special Rock for the Arts band were Durban Laverde who has jammed with Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy

Page and former Tina Turner pianist/singer John Miles, the son of the Led Zeppelin drummer Jason Bonham. Guest artist Venezuelan Alexis Pena, now performing in Miami.

The program was a night of nostalgia, featuring the Classic Rock that is Hard Rock Cafe's stock and trade; a retrospect of the great hits of Led Zeppelin. Alexis proved to have exactly the right voice for that kind of driving beat, which drew the audience of all ages to the dance floor.

Principal sponsor for the event was Hard Rock Cafe, which donated the venue of the buffet. Others include Amazonia, The Aqua Grill, Bula Surf Shop, Cliffix Music, De Palm Tours, Frasa, Fofoti Tours, H.T. Tailors, Pelican Adventures, Playa Liquor and Bottling, Playa Linda Resort, Radisson hotel, and Romar Trading, who provided the electric guitar, dinners at local restaurants, resort stays, personally tailored shirts, and local cruises that were raffled off to further raise

funds.

The fun evening will help complete the ISA Arts Complex, housing departments dedicated to World Language, Visual, Performing and Dialogue Arts and a Multidisciplinary Conference Room.



Vocalist Alexis Pena with Rock for the Arts Band

"With the addition of this building," asserts ISA Principal Sarah Putnam, "ISA teachers and staff will be able to create programs that will inspire students to grow and learn in all dimensions — physical, academic and spiritual. The Arts fill a niche and foster the human spirit in ways unattain-

able through academic or athletic activities. ISA can become a true partner in the development of strong educational programs around the island with the wonderful support we have received from our various sponsors, and the fabulous concert Ernesto Ferroi has produced."



Ernesto Ferroi and violinist Carol Horn

Buster's is back in Eagle Beach at Trop Casino



The home of the Beer Pong drinking game

Fans of Aruba's favorite sports bar are happy to hear that Buster's Garage has relocated to the restaurant/bar space inside Trop Casino. Now Eagle Beach resort guests have a great place for a bargain-priced breakfast or a bucket of beer while rooting for the team of their choice.

Buster's has that great, homey feel of settling in to

enjoy a game with buddies, greatly due to the warmth and enthusiasm of owner Rusty. He takes pride in making patrons feel welcome. "If somebody really needs to watch their home team on the field, we'll be happy to put it on for them," he confidently assured us. "We have 3 satellite dishes with separate packages to pick up every station imaginable. If

there is a game going on out there somewhere, we'll find it."

With giant screens everywhere throughout the joint, there isn't a bad seat in the house. Aside from their all day menu of game-watching favorites, they also feature a hearty breakfast menu. The "Grand Slam Platter" includes eggs any style, pancakes or



A whopping cheese nachos w/chicken dish



Threesome, takes care of the entertainment

waffles, bacon, juice, fresh made home fries with coffee or tea for only \$9. Lunch and dinner menus reflect the same moderate pricing with required sports bar standards such as chicken wings, club sandwiches, burgers and a heaping helping of nachos, averaging \$9; pizza and main courses range from \$11 to \$15.

Aside from the games and the gambling, patrons can expect great entertainment three nights weekly with one of Aruba's most popular trios,

"Threesome." There are also some wild times getting acquainted with Rusty's Beer Pong, the Drinking Game of Champions. Win or lose, players always end up with a smile on their face.

This family friendly place, with air hockey and video games for the kids, along with a special menu for young ones, is open 7 days a week from 7:30 AM until 1:00 AM for late night snacking and fun.

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

--Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches



and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of

Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great

demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the

investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

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SPORTS

Auto racing: Hinchcliffe pips Sato for Sao Paulo win

SAO PAULO (AFP) - Canada's James Hinchcliffe overtook Takuma Sato in the final turn Sunday to win the Sao Paulo Indy 300 on Sunday, denying the Japanese driver a second straight Indy-Car triumph.

Hinchcliffe won by .3463sec, his second victory of the year after winning the season opener at St. Petersburg, Florida.

American Marco Andretti nabbed the last spot on the podium finishing third ahead of Spain's Oriol Servia.

"There's no cooler way to win a race -- in the last corner of the last lap," said Hinchcliffe, who led the four Andretti Autosport cars finishing in the top 11.

"Takuma was making that race car really wide and he was defending the inside pretty well -- almost too well a couple times. He just outbroke himself just a little bit and I was able to do a high-low (pass) and got the win."

Sato, who became the first Japanese driver to win an IndyCar race with his triumph in Long Beach on April 21, will take a 13-point lead over Andretti in the IndyCar standings into the 97th running of the Indianapolis 500 on May 26.

Brazilian Helio Castroneves, who led in points through three races, fell to third in the standings with a 13th-place finish.

Pole sitter Ryan Hunter-Reay finished 11th. Australia's Will Power, who had won the previous three races in Brazil, had gained 12 places from his 22nd starting position before a fire in his car ended his day.

Football: Supersub Messi edges Barcelona closer to title

MADRID (AFP) - Lionel Messi came off the bench to move Barcelona within two points of clinching the La Liga title with a 4-2 win over Real Betis at Camp Nou on Sunday.

Dorlan Pabon and Ruben Perez had twice given the visitors the lead in the first-half either side of Alexis Sanchez's equaliser.

However, after David Villa had once again levelled the scores, it was unsurprisingly left to Messi to decide matters as within three minutes of coming on he fired in a won-



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (left) is congratulated by Xavi Hernandez (centre) and Andres Iniesta after scoring during the Spanish league match against Real Betis at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona.

derful free-kick and then was on hand to tap home at the end of a flowing move involving Sanchez and Andres Iniesta.

However, following the Bayern defeat, Barca again started in the worst possible fashion as a goal kick from Jose Manuel Pinto was headed back towards the Barca goal by Jorge Molina and avoided everyone on its way through to Pabon who finished confidently into Pinto's right-hand corner.

The lead only lasted six minutes as Iniesta turned wonderfully on the left and delivered a tantalising ball into the middle which Sanchez bulleted home with his head to register his sixth league goal of the season.

Villa then passed up two incredible chances to give Barca the lead as he inexplicably blazed over from six yards after being teed up perfectly by

Iniesta and Xavi before placing his side-footed effort too close to Adrian after Cristian Tello had cut the ball back from the byline.

Tello was then desperately unlucky as he cut in from the left and rocketed a shot that came off the underside off the bar that didn't quite fully cross the line on its way back out.

However, Betis were back in front two minutes before half-time as Perez found the top corner with a glorious strike from fully 30 yards.

The game was turned on its head again within 15 minutes of the restart though as Villa finally got his name on the scoresheet as he took advantage of incredibly slack Betis defending to head home Dani Alves' cross before being replaced by Messi.

And it took the World Player of the Year just three minutes to make his mark on the game

with a sumptuous free-kick that curled into Adrian's top left-hand corner.

That goal ensured Messi continued his streak of scoring in 21 consecutive league games and he so nearly repeated the trick with another free-kick that struck the bar nine minutes later.

But the Argentine soon did have his second of the evening thanks an outrageously good Barca move as an Iniesta back-heel released Sanchez and he laid the ball back across goal for Messi to roll into an empty net.

Elsewhere, Real Zaragoza moved out of the relegation zone with just their second win of 2013 as two goals from Antonio Apono and another from Rodri handed them a comfortable 3-0 victory over Rayo Vallecano.

Mallorca are now four points from safety with just four games remaining though as they could only managed a 1-1 draw at home to Levante.

In the day's other match between two sides with outside hopes of European football next season, a first-half blitz from Sevilla saw them beat Espanyol 3-0.

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NBA: Durant, Thunder edge Grizzlies in 2nd round opener

OKLAHOMA CITY (AFP) - Kevin Durant scored 12 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter as Oklahoma City rallied for a 93-91 win over Memphis in the opener of their second round NBA playoff series.

Durant delivered his team's final three baskets from the floor for the Thunder, including a go-ahead jump shot with 11.1 seconds remaining that gave the Thunder a 91-90 lead.

Reggie Jackson made two free throws to stretch the lead to 93-90 with 2.9 seconds left.

The Grizzlies' Quincy Pondexter still had a chance to tie the game from the free-throw

line, but was unable to make all three of his foul shots with less than two seconds to play.

Oklahoma City will host game two of the best-of-seven Western Conference series on Tuesday.

The Thunder trailed by as many as 12 in the second half, but Durant -- second to Miami's LeBron James in the Most Valuable Player voting announced on Sunday -- kept them in it, finishing with game highs in points and in rebounds with 15 and assists with six.

Kevin Martin came off the bench to score 25 points for the second straight game, after helping the Thunder oust the Houston Rockets in game six of their first-round series.

Jackson finished with 12 points on four-of-eight shooting from the field.

Memphis, who won four straight games to climb out of an 0-2 hole and eliminate the Los Angeles Clippers in the first round, had double-doubles from Marc Gasol and Zach Randolph.

Spain's Gasol, the NBA Defensive Player of the Year, scored 20 points and grabbed 10 rebounds -- but committed a costly turnover just after Durant had put the Thunder ahead with 11.1 seconds left.

Randolph scored 18 points and pulled down 10 rebounds.

Both teams were playing on short rest, after wrapping up their first-round series on Friday. The Thunder had to do it on the road in Houston, while Memphis polished off the Clippers at home.

The second Western Conference second-round series starts today, when the San Antonio Spurs host the Golden State Warriors.

NBA: It's official - James near-unanimous MVP

NEW YORK (AFP) - The NBA made it official Sunday, announcing Miami Heat superstar LeBron James was a near-unanimous choice as Most Valuable Player, earning the award for a second straight year and fourth time overall.

James's victory in the voting had been widely reported since Friday, although when asked about it the player himself had urged reporters not to "jinx" him by jumping the gun.

He needn't have worried.

James garnered 120 first-place votes from a possible 121 which included a 120-member media panel and a fan poll conducted on NBA.com that counted for one vote.

James received a total of

1,207 points in the balloting, with Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant a distant second with 765 points and the New York Knicks' Carmelo Anthony third with 475 points and one first-place vote.

No player has ever been a unanimous winner. James matched Shaquille O'Neal -- as a Los Angeles Laker in 2001 -- in receiving all but one first-place vote.

"He deserves it," teammate Ray Allen said. "What he's done for this team, we've come to expect so many things. He set the bar so high, but what he does is miraculous."

James joins legends Michael Jordan, Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

and Bill Russell as MVP award winners at least four times in their careers.

James's four MVP trophies have come in the span of five seasons, a feat only previously accomplished by Russell, who won in 1961, 1962, 1963 and 1965.

James also won in 2009, 2010 and 2012, with Chicago Bulls guard Derrick Rose interrupted his streak in 2011.

In that span, James has won last season's MVP award, the NBA Finals MVP award for leading the Heat over Oklahoma City for the title last June and an Olympic gold medal in August with the US squad of NBA stars at the London Games.

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NBA: Second-round playoff results



NEW YORK (AFP) - Joakim Noah scored 24 points and grabbed 14 rebounds Saturday to lead the injury-ravaged Chicago Bulls to a 99-93 victory over the Brooklyn Nets and into the second round of the NBA playoffs.

Facing a do-or-die seventh game, Noah asserted himself in every facet of the contest -- connecting on 12-of-17 shots from the field and also blocking six shots.

The victory in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference first-round series earned the Bulls a second-round clash with reigning NBA champions Miami.

Chicago were without forward Luol Deng, their regular-season scoring leader who spent part of Saturday in hospital in Chicago.

Britain's Deng had missed game six -- which the Bulls lost in Chicago -- when he came down with flu-like symptoms, then developed complications from a spinal tap that he had to rule out a possible case of meningitis.

Chicago, which played all season without star Derrick Rose as he recovered from knee surgery, was also without guard Kirk Hinrich, still nursing a calf injury.

But the Bulls showed a sense of urgency that the Nets couldn't match.

Noah scored 16 points in the first half, leading three Chicago players who scored in double figures en route to a 61-44 half-time lead.

Noah also pulled down five offensive rebounds in the first half, his energy setting a tone for the Bulls.

Marco Belinelli, stepping in for Deng, finished with 24 points for Chicago. Carlos Boozer added 17 and Nate Robinson scored 12.

The Bulls will now travel to Miami for game one against LeBron James and the Heat today.

Early Sunday The Brooklyn

Nets parted company with coach P.J. Carlesimo, less than 24 hours after injury-depleted Chicago ousted the Nets from the NBA playoffs with a first-round game-seven victory in Brooklyn.

Carlesimo had taken over the Nets head coaching job on an interim basis when he took over from Avery Johnson on December 27.

Over the final 54 games of the season he led the Nets to a 35-19 record as he helped the club reach the playoffs in their first season since moving from New Jersey to Brooklyn.

Under Carlesimo, the Nets reached the post-season for the first time since 2007.



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Mayweather batters Guerrero to keep WBC title

LAS VEGAS (AFP) - World Boxing Council champion Floyd Mayweather extended his perfect record to 44 victories Saturday, beating Robert Guerrero by unanimous decision in their welterweight title fight. Mayweather, who was defending his title for the first time since serving a jail term for domestic violence, dominated a bloodied Guerrero for most of the fight at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino. All three judges scored the 12-round fight 117-111 in favour of Mayweather. The 36-year-old Mayweather was also fighting for the first time in a year as he improved to 44-0 with 26 knockouts. Guerrero, who had his 15-fight win streak dating back to 2005 snapped, fell to 31-2-1, with 18 knockouts. Both fighters had their fathers working their corners Saturday. Mayweather sacked his uncle and longtime cornerman Roger Mayweather in favour of bringing his father Floyd Sr back for this fight. Mayweather had plenty of critics heading into Saturday's fight who said factors working against him included increasing age, the change in trainers and the conviction and jail term. The fight started slowly, with Guerrero the aggressor and Mayweather feeling the challenger out. Mayweather began to seize control in the third round and dictated the pace from there, using his superior foot and hand speed to keep Guerrero off balance. Mayweather landed one of his hardest punches in the eighth round -- a roundhouse right that wobbled Guerrero, whose face was starting to show the effects of being hit with a barrage of straight rights stinging counterpunches and lunging jabs. The ring-savvy Mayweather cruised through the middle and later rounds, using his strong defence to slip punches on the ropes and in the centre of the ring. Mayweather was so dominant in the later rounds that he stopped moving from side to side in the 11th, choosing to slug it out and landing punches at will against Guerrero, who never gave up but was hopelessly overmatched. The only blemish on his performance was that Mayweather, who made \$32 million for this fight, failed to get the knockout. Mayweather is committed to fighting September 14 when he could possibly face Mexico's Saul Alvarez.

